Other suggestions were put forward by the Shipping Committee in their memorandum of 10th February, and discussed from time to time. Some of them reached the formal stage of approval by the Board of Trade and sanction by the War Committee. Only a few travelled any distance beyond that stage.

Mr. Runciman, in his memorandum of 24th October, 1916—that is, nearly two years after the shipowners had called his attention to the congestion at the ports and its causes—said :—

> " It is significant that returns obtained by the Port and Transit Executive Committee show that no port claims to be able to give more than a normal rate of discharge to the ships, and many of them report a rate considerably below normal. . . . In view of the fact that the available labour at the ports has with difficulty handled the work in an unusually slack period, it is clear that urgent action is necessary if our ports are not to be blocked during the busier season now commencing."

Mr. Runciman followed this up by a further memorandum on 9th November, in the course of which he said :—

> " The effectiveness of our tonnage is diminishing by reason of the slowness of loading and discharging which is intensified as more men are taken away

from the docks, harbours, railways, warehouses,
carting and wagon industries. We are getting
less transport out of each 100 vessels than we got
a year ago."